

THE KHASIS

787 case. The Khasi word for consulting the omens is *khan*, and
 [791] a diviner is called a *nongkhan*. Another method of obtaining
 omens is by dropping two leaves into a pool of water or on
 a stone, the position of the leaves as they fall, either right side
 uppermost or upside down, signifying good or evil as the case
 may be; this is called *khan-sla*.

PRIESTHOOD.

- 793 The Khasi priest is usually called *Lyngdoh*, or *langdoh*; he is
 104 always appointed from the *lyngdoh* clan. The etymology of the
 word *lyngdoh* is said by certain *lyngdohs* of the Khyrim State to
 be *lang*=together and *doh*=flesh. A *lyngdoh*, or *langdoh*, is
 one who collects sacrificial victims, i.e. flesh for the purpose of
 sacrificing. It must be confessed, however, that this definition
 is doubtful, owing to the absence in the word *lyngdoh* of the
 prefix *nong* which is the sign of the agent in Khasi. Besides
lyngdohs there are persons called *soh-blei* or *soh-sla*, who may
 793 also be said to be priests. The Khasis, unlike the Hindus, have
 [604] no *purohit* or priest to perform the family ceremonies. Such
 782 duties fall to the lot of the head of the family or clan, who
 carries them out generally through the agency of the *kni*, or
 maternal uncle. Old Khasis are frequently well versed in the
 details of sacrifices, and in the art of obtaining auguries by
 examining the viscera of sacrificial victims. Apart from family
 and clan sacrifices, there are the sacrifices for the good of the
 State or community at large; it is these sacrifices that it is the
 duty of the *lyngdoh* to perform. He may be said to be the priest
 of the communal religion, although he has certain duties in
 connection with offences committed against the social law of
 marriage, and with regard to the casting out of evil spirits from
 houses which may be thought to be infested with them. The
lyngdohs of the Khasis may be likened to the Roman *ponti-*
 793 *fices*. In the different Khasi States there is, as a rule, more
 631 than one *lyngdoh*; sometimes there is quite a number of such
 793 priests, as in Nongkrem where there is a *lyngdoh* for each *raj*
 643 or division of the state. There are a few Khasi States where
 the priest altogether takes the place of the Siem, and rules the
 community with the help of his elders in addition to perform-

LISTS

000	1. The Household Heads and their Wives of Rombagiri.	41
	2. Numbers by <i>Mahari</i> of Individuals named in List 1.	42
	3. Numbers by <i>Mahari</i> of Household Heads and their Wives of Emangiri.	59
	4. Household Heads and their Wives of Rinsibara.	83
	5. Names of Villages of Immigrants and of Emigrants to and from Rinsibara.	86
	6. House-owners and their Spouses of Sohkynduh.	107-108
	7. Numbers by <i>Kur</i> of Individuals named in List 6.	108
	8. Actual Descent Links found among House-owners of Sohkynduh.	109
	9. House-owners and their Spouses of Kongton.	109-110
	10. Numbers by <i>Kur</i> of Individuals named in List 9.	110-111
	11. Actual Descent Links found among House-owners of Kongton.	111

PLATES

- A. Garó houses at Silcochigiri village.
- B. Garó house taken from back side, at Rombagiri village.
- C. Garó women of Emangiri Village.
- D. Preparation of *deranga* (funeral alter) at Rombagiri.
- E. Khasi Jhum fields near Kongton village.
- F. Khasi House at Sohkynduh village.
- G. Old Khasi women of Kongton village.
- H. Young Khasi women of Shella village.

K
9